

The Importance of Influenza Vaccination

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Influenza (Flu) Is Serious and Preventable

- ❖ Each year about 1,000 people die from flu-related illness
- ❖ Approximately 226,000 Americans are hospitalized and more than 36,000 die from influenza and influenza-related complications annually
- ❖ In fact, influenza—a vaccine-preventable disease—is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States

How Flu Vaccination Benefits Everyone

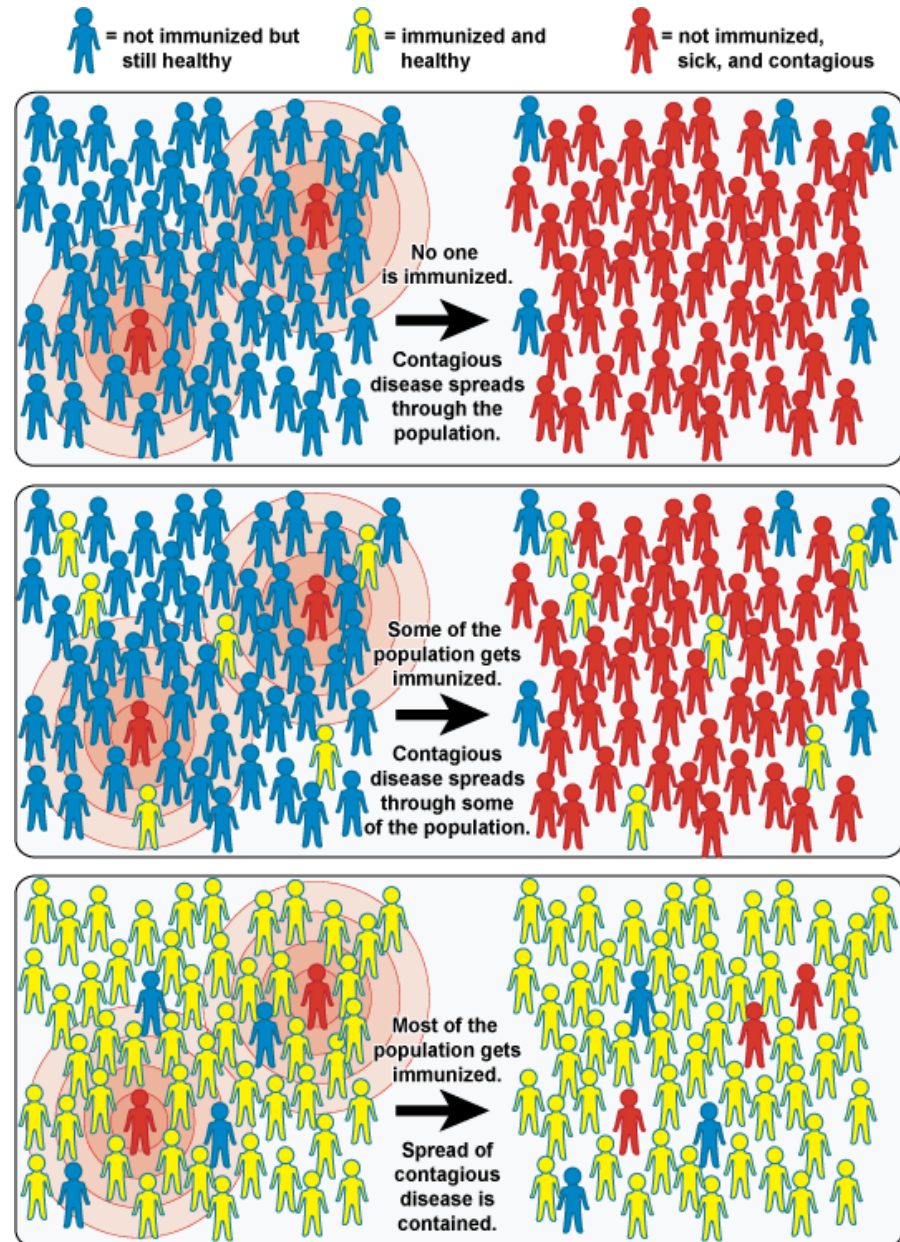
❖ Getting a yearly flu vaccination is the single best way to prevent the flu



❖ Vaccination protects you, your patients and co-workers, your family and the entire community

How Flu Vaccination Benefits Your Community

- ❖ When most of the population is vaccinated the spread of the Flu is contained.
- ❖ Containing the spread of the Flu helps protect people in your community and/or work environment who are unable to be vaccinated, such as:
 - ❖ Young Babies
 - ❖ People with a severe allergy to Flu vaccine
 - ❖ People who are severely immune-compromised
 - ❖ People with a history of Guillain–Barré Syndrome



Personnel working in healthcare settings have a Special Obligation...

- ❖ All personnel who may care for or share the air with patients while working in clinical buildings have a responsibility to protect them by making sure we are immunized against influenza each year
- ❖ Healthcare personnel (HCP) and other covered employees can be the source of influenza outbreaks in institutional and clinical settings

Common Flu Myths and Facts

MYTH: I don't need the Flu vaccine because I am healthy.
I never get influenza

FACT: You may become infected and experience mild or no symptoms, but still pass the virus to vulnerable patients and members of your family

Even employees who think they are healthy can spread the flu

In one study of HCP conducted after a mild influenza season:

- ❖ 23% of HCP had antibody evidence of influenza infection in their blood
 - ❖ 59% of those could not recall having influenza
 - ❖ 28% could not recall any respiratory infection

This suggests that many people have flu without feeling sick

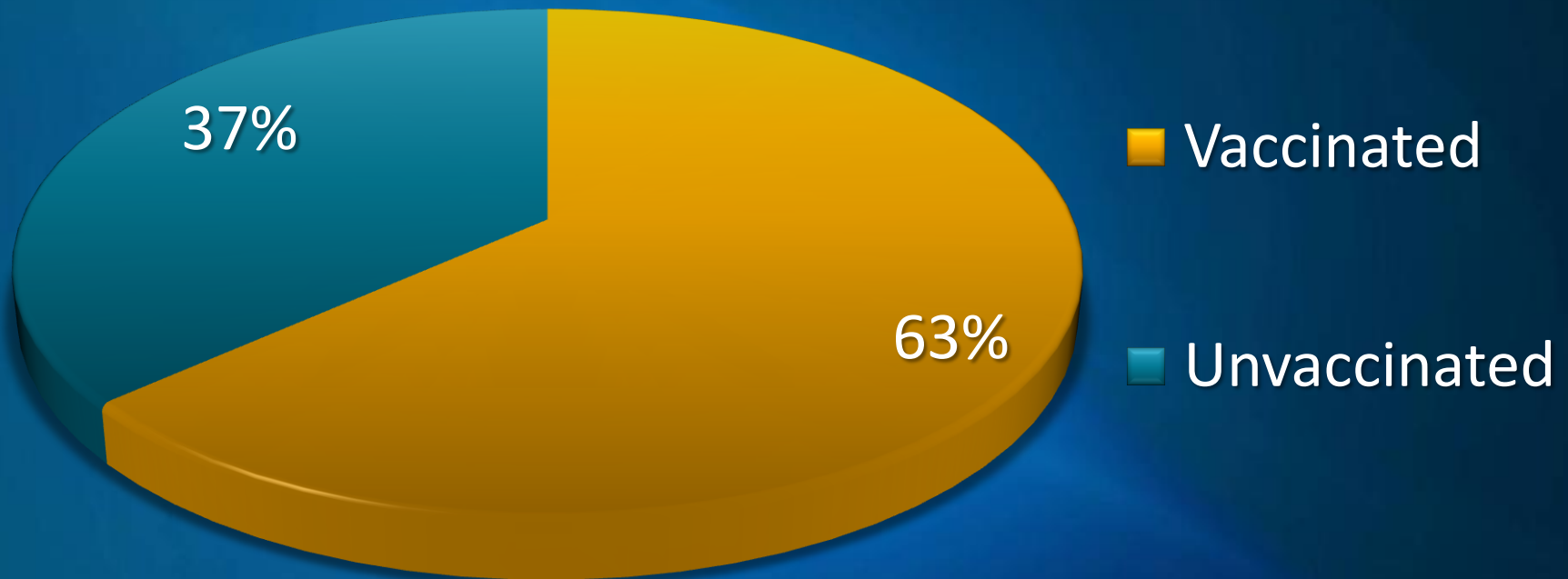
The benefits of employee vaccination in clinical settings

Over a period of 12 years in one hospital, vaccination coverage increased from 4% to 67%

- ❖ Laboratory-confirmed influenza cases among HCP decreased from 42% to 9%
- ❖ Health care acquired cases among hospitalized patients decreased 32% to 0 ($p < 0.0001$)

Healthcare Personnel Vaccination

Who still needs to be vaccinated?



CDC. (2011) Influenza Vaccination Coverage among Health Care Personnel--United States, August 2010-April 2011.
http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6032a1.htm?s_cid=mm6032a1_w

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends annual influenza immunization for all healthcare personnel.

Common Flu Myths and Facts

MYTH: I don't want to get the Flu from the vaccine.

FACT: It is impossible to contract the flu from the vaccine, which contains inactivated (killed) virus or attenuated (weakened) virus

Sometimes people who have been vaccinated are exposed to flu before the vaccine has time to work (1 to 2 weeks after vaccination) and may think that the vaccine caused their illness

Vaccine Safety

- ❖ Flu vaccine is very safe and is recommended even for people with medical conditions like heart and lung disease and diabetes
- ❖ The most common side effects of the flu shot include soreness, redness, or swelling at the site of the injection.
 - ❖ These reactions are temporary and occur in 15%–20% of recipients
- ❖ Less than 1% of vaccine recipients develop symptoms such as fever, chills, and muscle aches for 1 to 2 days following the vaccination

Vaccine Safety (Cont.)

- ❖ These symptoms are more likely to occur in a person who has never been exposed to the flu virus or vaccine
- ❖ Experiencing these mild side effects does not mean that you are getting the Flu
- ❖ Flu vaccine CANNOT give you the Flu

Common Flu Myths and Facts

MYTH: I'm pregnant and concerned about harm to my unborn baby from the influenza vaccine, especially if it contains the preservative thimerosal.

FACT: Influenza infection during pregnancy increases the risk of serious medical complications for the mother. Therefore, pregnant women are among the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention top priority groups for influenza immunization. Influenza vaccines that contain thimerosal are safe for use in pregnant women based on a study of influenza vaccination in more than 2000 pregnant women in which there was no harm to the baby. Women, who are still concerned, can request thimerosal free vaccine from their doctors. Talk to your doctor if you have questions.

Other benefits of vaccination

- ❖ If everyone is vaccinated we will reduce the impact of flu and decrease healthcare costs



- ❖ In another study, HCP who got flu vaccine had 28% fewer documented lost work days due to respiratory infections
- ❖ Your co-workers need you to be healthy and able to cover your shift

Take these everyday steps to prevent influenza transmission:

- ❖ Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it
- ❖ If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands
- ❖ Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze or touch surfaces that many others may have also touched. You can also use an alcohol-based hand cleaner
- ❖ Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- ❖ Stay home if you are sick until at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever (100°F or 37.8°C) or signs of a fever (without the use of a fever-reducing medicine, such as Tylenol®)
- ❖ While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them

Flu Vaccination Protects Everyone

- ❖ By getting vaccinated against the flu you help create a safer atmosphere not just here at work but everywhere you go
- ❖ You getting vaccinated against the flu helps protect us ALL

Patients

Co-workers

Visitors

Family

Friends

Community

More Information on HCP Flu Vaccination

Influenza Vaccination of Health-Care Personnel

Recommendations of the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC) and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5502a1.htm>

Influenza Vaccination Information for Health Care Workers

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/HealthcareWorkers.htm>

Prevent Influenza - **Information for Healthcare Professionals**

<http://www.preventinfluenza.org/professionals.asp>

Influenza Immunization Among Health Care Personnel – Call to Action

<http://www.nfid.org/pdf/publications/fluhealthcarecta08.pdf>

Ask the Experts - Influenza vaccination issues for healthcare workers

http://www.immunize.org/askexperts/experts_inf.asp